

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GABORO 01460 191359Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 IO-13 /094 W
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P R 191037Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TM RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2265
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 1460

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV PINS RH
SUBJ: RHODESIA: ZANU (SITHOLE) REP ON CIVILIAN DEATHS

REF: LUSAKA 1768

1. ZANU (SITHOLE) REP IN BOTSWANA, OLIVER SAWUNYAMA, CALLED AT EMBASSY MAY 18 TO DISCUSS MAY 14 CLASH AT GUTU (REFTEL). ACCORDING TO SAWUNYAMA, PARTY OF SELOUS SCOUTS WITHOUT PROVOCATION ATTACKED A MEETING BETWEEN SITHOLE SUPPORTERS AND GUERRILLAS WHICH HAS BEEN CALLED TO REQUEST GUERRILLAS TO ATTEND SITHOLE RALLY SCHEDULE FOR MAY 20 IN SALISBURY. SAWUNYAMA TOLD US THAT HE HAD JUST TALKED BY TELEPHONE WITH ZANU (SITHOLE) VICE PRESIDENT NYEMBA WHO SPOKE OF WIDESPREAD "INDIGNATION" WITHIN ZANU OVER THE INCIDENT. ACCORDING
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PAGE 02 GABORO 01460 191359Z

TO SAWUNYAMA, NYEMBA PUT DEATH TOLL IN INCIDENT AT 90 RATHER THAN 50 AS REPORTED IN RHODESIAN PRESS.

2. SAWUNYAMA ATTRIBUTED INCIDENT TO RANDOM VIOLENCE BY ELEMENTS OF RHODESIAN SECURITY FORCES WHICH ARE STILL NOT RECONCILED TO INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. HE DID NOT BELIEVE ATTACK WAS ORDERED BY COMBINED OPERATIONS AND SAW NO POSSIBILITY

THAT SITHOLE MIGHT PULL OUT OF AGREEMENT AS MUZOREWA THREATENED TO DO OVER HOVE INCIDENT. IN FACT, SAWUNYAMA REITERATED STANDARD SITHOLE LINE THAT THERE IS NO TURNING BACK AND THAT MUZOREWA'S VACILLATIONS ARE "CHEAP POLITICAL TRICKS" WHICH "PLAY WITH THE FUTURE OF ZIMBABWE".

3. WHEN ASKED WHAT MEASURES SITHOLE MIGHT TAKE TO REGISTER HIS DISAPPROVAL OF ATTACK ON HIS SUPPORTERS, SAWUNYAMA SUGGESTED THAT RHODESIAN SOLDIERS RESPONSIBLE FOR INCIDENT SHOULD BE INDIVIDUALLY PUNISHED. ACCORDING TO SAWUNYAMA, SITHOLE HAS CALLED FOR OFFICIAL INQUIRY INTO INCIDENT. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT INCIDENT DAMAGED CREDIBILITY OF INTERNAL SETTLEMENT AND VOLUNTEERED THAT "SOMETHING WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE" TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE.

4. COMMENT: SAWUNYAMA IS PROBABLY CORRECT THAT SITHOLE IS TOO DEEPLY COMMITTED TO INTERNAL SETTLEMENT TO DO MORE THAN PROTEST THE KILLING OF HIS SUPPORTERS. THE NORMALLY CONFIDENT SAWUNYAMA SEEMED DEEPLY DISCOURAGED OVER THE LATEST EVIDENCE THAT INTERNAL SETTLEMENT MAY NOT BE ABLE TO STOP THE WAR.
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